

but the source of dreams is God. When God is behind your dream, He won't let you run from it. But we must remember to keep our focus squarely on God, not on the dream.

You may not have a literal dream, but if God stirs a strong desire in you, that could be His "dream" for your life. The key to finding and following that dream is found in Proverbs 3:6. Seek His will in all you do.

Proverbs 3:6 NKJV - 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.

Is there an opportunity that is presenting itself to you? Perhaps you want to gather people together for some ministry, or champion God's cause in the community? Have you heard of some event or organization that keeps coming to mind? Don't be afraid to knock on that door and see if God opens it.

Expect God to direct you and when He does, trust Him and follow despite the opposition of others or your own skepticism. If God is in it, and you trust Him, He can do great things.

WRAP-UP

God gives us permission to dream. In fact, He can place great dreams in us. But some of us have lost our ability to dream. When we were young dreams were easy, but as we grew older and met with opposition, we may have set aside the dreams God placed in us; not dreams based on our qualifications or abilities, but dreams God has for us. God is fully capable of accomplishing those dreams when we remain focused on Him and trust that He will use us if we let Him.

Memory Verse

In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.
- Proverbs 3:6 NKJV

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs: _____

Challenge- Ask God to show you the next step you might take to see His dream fulfilled in your life. Don't be afraid to dream big.

"Determine your Focus"

"2020" #1

INTRODUCTION

When optometrists say you have 20/20 vision, they are referring to your visual acuity- the sharpness or clarity at which you see things that are 20 feet away from you. Our "2020" sermon series will focus on how to see your life more clearly. Some of the greatest heroes of the Bible discovered the direction for their lives through dreams. This was certainly true of Joseph. His life gives us an example of what we may face when God puts a dream in our heart.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Do you usually remember what you dreamed?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Permission to dream

Genesis 37:2-11 NLT - 2 This is the account of Jacob and his family. When Joseph was seventeen years old, he often tended his father's flocks. He worked for his half brothers, the sons of his father's wives Bilhah and Zilpah. But Joseph reported to his father some of the bad things his brothers were doing. 3 Jacob loved Joseph more than any of his other children because Joseph had been born to him in his old age. So one day Jacob had a special gift made for Joseph--a beautiful robe. 4 But his brothers hated Joseph because their father loved him more than the rest of them. They couldn't say a kind word to him. 5 One night Joseph had a dream, and when he told his brothers about it, they hated him more than ever. 6 "Listen to this dream," he said. 7 "We were out in the field, tying up bundles of grain. Suddenly my bundle stood up, and your bundles all gathered around and bowed low before mine!" 8 His brothers responded, "So you think you will be our king, do you? Do you actually think you will reign over us?" And they hated him all the more because of his dreams and the way he talked about them. 9 Soon Joseph had another dream, and again he told his brothers about it. "Listen, I have had another dream," he said. "The sun, moon, and eleven stars bowed low before me!" 10 This time he told the dream to his father as well as to his brothers, but his father scolded him. "What kind of dream is that?" he asked. "Will your mother and I and your brothers actually come and bow to the ground before you?" 11 But while his brothers were jealous of Joseph, his father wondered what the dreams meant.

Although he was his father's favorite there were several brothers who might have expected to be in charge of the family long before Joseph. But God gave this dream to Joseph, and Joseph accepted and shared his dreams.

What are some of the reasons Joseph does not seem qualified to rule over Jacob's family?

If Joseph had only considered his own abilities or qualifications to achieve this dream, he would certainly have questioned why God would choose him. If Joseph feared his brothers more than he trusted God, he wouldn't have shared his dream. But by sharing the dream Joseph demonstrated that he trusted God, unlike many of his ancestors.

If God put a grand dream in your heart today, what objections would spring to mind? What is there in your personal history, or your present circumstances that might prevent you from dreaming of the ways God might choose to use you?

Joseph didn't hide his dreams, and neither should we. The things God might do through us are not dependent on how we see ourselves and our ability, but on our faith in God's ability to use us for His purposes. God gives us permission to dream, no matter who we are.

2. Anticipate opposition

Even though God had clearly given Joseph direction, and in fact reinforced it through a second dream, it wasn't an easy road.

What was the response of his brothers (Genesis 37:8, 11)? Why do you think Joseph could have expected that response? What was his father's response (Genesis 37:10)? Why do you think Joseph might be surprised by that?

We shouldn't be surprised when we face opposition to God's dream for us. Joseph's dream was a challenge to the power structure that was in place. It reinforced his brother's jealousy and challenged his father authority in his own family.

How have you seen people resist God's change of direction when it challenges the existing power structure? How do you determine if God's will is behind something that is being changed?

Rather than seeing the dream come to fruition, Joseph experienced hardship and disaster. After his brother's sold him into slavery, he was wrongly accused and thrown into prison where he spent years of his life. Certainly, this would cause anyone to doubt that they had heard God clearly.

How does Joseph's response to the other prisoners show that he still trusted God?

Genesis 40:8, 14-15, 23 NLT - 8 And they replied, "We both had dreams last night, but no one can tell us what they mean." "Interpreting dreams is God's business," Joseph replied. "Go ahead and tell me your dreams."...14 And please remember me and do me a favor when things go well for you. Mention me to Pharaoh, so he might let me out of this place. 15 For I was kidnapped from my homeland, the land of the Hebrews, and now I'm here in prison, but I did nothing to deserve it." ... 23 Pharaoh's chief cup-bearer, however, forgot all about Joseph, never giving him another thought.

Joseph knew God's plan but not the steps to accomplish it. God was at work in hidden and unnoticed ways. This is where we live much of our own lives, between the hint of God's plan, and praising God when we see it come to pass. ("between the hint and the Doxology")

Is there a dream that God has stirred in you, but you've put on the shelf because you don't see the next step to accomplish it? Share with your group if you think there might be something you once considered doing for God but have stopped pursuing.

You may have met with opposition to your dreams, but God is reliable and true. If He has a plan for you, he can make it happen, no matter your circumstances.

3. It's God's Dream

God downloaded the dream into Joseph. The reason some of us aren't dreaming isn't because we are not creative enough, or smart enough...the reason is because we think the source of dreams is us